

MEMOIR
OF
THE LIFE

OF THE
REV. JAMES HALDANE STEWART, M.A.
LATE RECTOR OF LIMPSFIELD, SURREY.

BY HIS SON,
THE REV. DAVID DALE STEWART, M.A.,
Incumbent of All Saints' Church, Maidstone.



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CHAPTER V.

HIS FIRST GREAT EFFORT TO PROMOTE PRAYER FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT.

[1820—1823.]

HE was still in such feeble health when he returned to London, that, "after much prayer for the direction of the Lord as to his future ministry," he nearly made up his mind to withdraw altogether from Percy Chapel, and to take a quiet curacy in some country place, where "in a humble way" he might serve the Lord. His Congregation had been much edified, during his absence, by Mr. Noel's preaching, and he had a long conference with that faithful Minister, in which the desirableness of transferring Percy Chapel to him was seriously considered, and almost determined upon; but in a few days afterwards Mr. Noel expressed a wish that the decision on the subject should be postponed, and after a delay of several weeks a definite arrangement was made, by which Mr. Noel continued in the position which he had occupied during Mr. Stewart's absence, and Mr. Stewart agreed to give occasional assistance without being responsible for any regular duty. He was thus set at liberty from the labours of the pastoral

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office, to which his strength was then unequal, and had leisure* for the prosecution of a work (more extensive in its scope, but involving less fatigue) with which his name is now very generally associated.

The office of the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity had, of course, constantly engaged his attention from the commencement of his ministry. He had often prayed that a large measure of the Spirit's influence might be bestowed upon himself. He had often tried to lead others to pray after the same manner; and, during his residence at Nice, he had assembled his fellow-Christians on the first day of the year 1820, that they might offer common supplication for the promise of the Father. But, about the time when he came back from the Continent, his thoughts began to be more than ever fixed on the Person and operations of "the Comforter." On the 24th September, which was one of the days when he helped Mr. Noel, he began a course of Lectures on the Offices of the Spirit, "with a view, by shewing the importance of His work, to excite to a general spirit of prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost."

On the 1st October, he wrote in his Diary:—

"Finding myself too weak to go to church this evening, I have been reading different parts of the Scriptures which regard the office of the Holy Spirit; and desire in a special manner to see more into this part of Divine truth, that I may be enabled, through the grace of God, to enter freely into this subject. I trust that the Lord, leading one of

* About the same time he was much relieved from anxiety about the income derived from the Chapel, by the kindness of his liberal friend Mr. Mortlock; who, with characteristic generosity, engage all the vacant sittings.

His servants to this subject, is a token of good. I hope it may become general. I pray that the Lord may follow the discourses of this day and the last Sabbath with His blessing. I pray that He would more fully reveal to me the office of the Holy Spirit, and enable me more fully to preach Him in all His works."

On the 11th November, after preaching eight discourses on the Offices of the Holy Ghost, and circulating a Prayer for the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit, he wrote again:— "I would, previous to the Sabbath, earnestly pray . . . for direction how to proceed with the plan for Prayer for the Holy Spirit." And on November 27th, after a private meeting with some clerical brethren, to consider the best means for making general the supplication for the Spirit's influence, he brought forward the subject at the Eclectic Society.

"It appeared," he recorded in his Diary, November 29th, "to excite general interest. Nothing, however, was done except agreeing that the President should make it the subject of his prayers at each Meeting, and that the Church Missionary Society should enlarge their meeting for prayer. I was requested to publish what I had written upon the subject."

Meanwhile he had repeatedly endeavoured, in private intercourse with others, to awaken their sympathy for the promotion of the great object on which he had set his heart. The following is an extract from a letter to Miss Ross, when asking her to be sponsor to his third son:—

"Alfred Place, Bedford Square, Nov. 9, 1820.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . I have been led much of late to endeavour to excite a general spirit of

prayer amongst the people of God, for the general outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I have found great delight in tracing the various offices of the Holy Spirit. It has a great tendency to enlarge our view of the Lord's wonderful plan of redemption. Every Person in the Blessed Trinity is seen to have a great share in this most astonishing work—saving miserable sinners, and placing them in eternal glory. I send you an 'Invitation to Prayer,' which I have circulated privately on this subject: may your prayers be very earnest for this inestimable gift! Let me recommend you to read the Scriptures with particular reference to the office of the Holy Spirit. How many are our obligations to Him! Have we ever felt convinced of our sins? Have we believed in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus? Have we seen anything of His glory? Have we had consolation in prayer and comfort in trouble? Have we been able at any times to exercise the grace of love? Who is the immediate agent? The Comforter. Here is the great difference in Christians—the degree in which the Holy Spirit acts upon them. Oh, may you, my very dear sister, receive a large measure of His sacred influence. May you abound in the fruits of the Spirit."

In the month of December he journeyed into the West of England in pursuance of the same design; and it is interesting to observe, that one of the first places in which he explained it to his fellow-Christians was the house of the Author of "The Practical View of Christianity," who was himself so largely instrumental in promoting a revival of religion. Mr. Stewart thus described his journey:—

"I went to Bath on Thursday, 7th, and arrived at Mr. Wilberforce's on Saturday, 9th. I had some interesting conversation with the Rev. Mr. Richards and the Rev. T.

Drummond, clergymen, and with the Rev. Mr. Lake, on the subject on which I went. They all agreed in its great importance. On Tuesday, 15th, I expounded the Scriptures to a large party at Mr. Wilberforce's, on John xvi., &c., when I entered fully into the subject, and distributed the Prayer."

He had previously written to the Rev. Fountain Elwyn, of Bristol:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I lately sent you an 'Invitation to Prayer,' which has been since inserted, with some alterations by the Editor, in the 'Christian Observer.' This Paper is only one of the attempts now using to excite the attention of serious Christians to this important subject. I need not tell you, that we are now living under the ministration of the Spirit: that not only is the indwelling of the Spirit the great mark which distinguishes the child of God from the man of the world; but that it is to the different degrees in which the Holy Spirit acts that we are to trace the greater conformity to the Saviour we see in some Christians than in others, the different success of Ministers, the edification of Churches, the prosperity of Societies, and, in short, the advancement of religion in individuals and in nations. Some of our brethren in London are deeply impressed with the important advantages which would arise from a more general consideration of the office of the Holy Spirit; and as you at Bristol are always ready for every good word and work, I should feel very thankful for your sentiments on this subject. You have, I believe, an Eclectic Society there. Could you propose for discussion at an early meeting these questions: What scriptural grounds have we to expect a general outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Are any, and what, means to be

used for obtaining this blessing, and, what is the most likely mode of exciting the Church of Christ generally to the use of these means? I have some thoughts of paying a visit near Bristol very soon, and if an arrangement could be made by which I might have the pleasure of meeting my brethren, many of whom are very dear to me, I should consider it a very great privilege. Pray remember me very affectionately to them, and wishing you every blessing which the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Holy Spirit can afford, I remain, yours very faithfully,

"JAMES HALDANE STEWART."

Accordingly he went on to Bristol after his visit to Bath; preached at St. James's (Mr. Biddulph's) Church as well as at Mr. Elwyn's Episcopal Chapel; and attended two Clerical Meetings, at which his subject was discussed. The Bristol Clergy determined "to open the Office of the Holy Spirit in their different congregations;" to preach on the subject in rotation at St. Werburgh's on Wednesdays; to set apart the hour from seven to eight on Sunday mornings for private prayer for the Holy Spirit; and to introduce petitions on the subject into their family worship on Monday evenings. "The Lord be praised," wrote Mr. Stewart, with a thankful heart, "for smiling on me thus far!" He reached home again on the 22nd December; and, when devoting a short season to meditation and prayer at the beginning of a New Year, wrote in his Diary, January 1st, 1821:—

"After reviewing the past year, I may well call it a year of peculiar mercy. In every way I have received blessings from the Lord. Amongst many other marks of His kindness, I would notice . . . giving me a blessing on

my journey, putting it into my heart to excite Christians to prayer for the Holy Spirit, and blessing me in my endeavours. . . . My great desire at present is to carry into effect the uniting of all Christians in prayer for the Holy Spirit. This engrosses all my wishes; at least, it is the uppermost thought in my mind. It seems to me so great an object, that, though I may proceed but slowly, I shall be richly repaid in the end."

Almost immediately afterwards he published a small Tract, entitled "Hints for a General Union of Christians for Prayer for the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit,"* which, after a description of the inability of all human efforts to renew the soul—the work of the Holy Ghost, as the Divine Sanctifier—and the encouragements to prayer for the influence of the Spirit, contained the following suggestions:—

"I. That all Ministers should seek a deeper and more abiding conviction of their own personal need of the Divine influences of the Holy Spirit, both for their own growth in grace, and for success in all parts of their ministerial labours; that under this conviction they may be led to more earnest secret prayer for this blessing.

"II. That they should unite with their brethren, as opportunities offer, in private social prayer for the general outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

* A few copies of this Tract having been sent to Boston, U.S., it was reprinted and circulated on the other side of the Atlantic by Mrs. Sweet. The greater part of it has since been published by the Religious Tract Society of London, in a small tract (No. 173), "An Appeal to Christians for general and united Prayer for the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit." In February, 1855, the Depository of the Society reported that 332,137 copies of it had been distributed.

"III. That they should preach upon the various offices of the Holy Spirit, that their congregations may be more practically acquainted with His important work in our salvation.

"IV. That in their general discourses, they should constantly honour the Holy Spirit, by entreating His Divine aid, and ascribing their success to Him.

"V. That, in large towns, a weekly Lecture should be set apart for the above purposes.

"VI. That, in the prayer-meetings which are now held by different denominations of Christians, special prayer should be made for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

"VII. That all Christians should be invited to set apart, individually, an hour, from seven till eight o'clock, on the Sabbath morning, for private prayer and meditation on this subject: their prayers may include the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon themselves, their families, their ministers, their congregations, their country; all ministers of true religion, all societies formed for doing good, the heathen, and the Jews.

"VIII. That all heads of families on Monday evening should entreat the same blessing in their family devotions.

"IX. That all Christians should read the Scriptures with a view to a more intimate acquaintance with this subject, and to have it more deeply impressed on their minds, that the Holy Spirit always acts in accordance with the word of God, and never contrary thereto.

"X. That they should mention it to their religious correspondents at home and abroad; each Christian using his utmost ability to make this union for prayer as extensive as possible.

"XI. That religious periodical publications should be requested to aid in the design; and that this Paper, if

approved, should be reprinted, and other tracts written and published.

“XII. That whilst Christians offer their prayers in simple reliance on the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, they should accompany them with deep humiliation for their own sins, for the sins of their country, and for the sins of the whole Church—and aim, in their conduct, to walk in love with all Christians, to be watchful against grieving the Holy Spirit, and in all things to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.”

Upon the 18th of January his Diary records that he was expecting on the morrow to meet “the Secretaries of the different Missionary Societies,” with a view to engage them in his object, and that on the following Monday he was to bring it again before the Eclectic Society. In anticipation of the two Meetings, he secured time for special supplication at the Throne of Grace, and prayed,—

“That the Lord will graciously smile upon the attempts I am now making for uniting His people; incline the hearts of persons to read the ‘Hints;’ make them useful; assist us especially to-morrow and Monday evening; give me fresh thoughts in writing the larger Address I have in view; and, in all that regards this matter, vouchsafe me His special direction.”

“I will wait,” he added, after offering these and other petitions, “for the God of my salvation—

“MY GOD WILL HEAR ME.”*

The question relative to his great design, which had been proposed by Mr. Wilson at the Eclectic Society

* This sentence is printed by the hand in capitals in his Diary.

occasioned so long a discussion, that it was adjourned to the next Meeting, on the understanding that he would then re-open it himself. Meanwhile, he “found fervour in casting the whole case upon the Lord;” but was somewhat disheartened by the opposition and censures of some of his brethren in the ministry. His depression of spirit increased after the debate at the Eclectic had been renewed; for when he “proposed to have a weekly Lecture on the subject,” this was not deemed practicable, but “it was determined to have prayer on the subject at the Eclectic; to enlarge the prayer-meetings now going forward; and that the brethren should preach on the Sunday on the subject:”—

“I left the Meeting,” he wrote on the following day, “much cast down at the turn the discussion took; but I desire to submit it to the Lord; to pray that I may not be discouraged, but still persevere.

“BE THOU MY HELP, O LORD.”

It is instructive to compare with this passage in his Diary the following affectionate letter from his faithful friend, Mr. Wilson, which seems to have been written at the very same time.

“Tuesday.

“MY DEAREST BROTHER,—My distance from you makes me fearful of promising to call; but pray—pray be not DISCOURAGED. I was pained at one or two things which were said last night, and at the spirit of many more. Still meditate on what can be done.

“1. Express and separate prayer once a fortnight, at the Eclectic.

“2. Express and separate prayer every Saturday night,

at the Missionary House; where I will meet you next Saturday (D.V.), or any other Saturday.

“3. Courses of Sermons by all our brethren in their several churches. I am determined to begin mine on a Sunday evening, almost directly, D.V.

“I write to assure you of my love, and the deep interest I take. Go on.

“Ever yours,

“D. WILSON.”

At the next Meeting of the Eclectic it was agreed that the Meetings should end with prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; and about the same time the “Hints” appeared in the “Christian Observer,” as well as in the “Methodist” and “Baptist Magazines.”

On Sunday evening, March 3rd, 1821, Mr. Stewart wrote:—

“I feel at a loss what to do more in this business at present. I much wish the Lord’s direction. The times increase the importance of the subject. On Wednesday the House of Commons agreed to consider the Catholic Question; and we have accounts of the Emperor of Austria making war with Naples; but I see few Christians who seem disposed to enter heartily into this business. I would humbly pray:—

“1st. That the Lord would bless the papers in the Magazines to excite a spirit of prayer in His people. O Lord, grant Thy people light and love. Quicken their souls. Revive Thy work in the midst of the years.

“2nd. That He would graciously direct me what means to take for promoting His cause.

“3rd. That He would increase my zeal and love.

“4th. That He would assist me, in opening a door where I may serve Him.

“5th. That He would bless the Sabbath.

“6th. That He would pour His Spirit on His Church and the nations.”

Towards the end of the same month, there was a Meeting at his house, which was attended by Ministers of various denominations, for consulting upon the best means of exciting prayer for the Holy Spirit:—

“I bless the Lord,” he previously wrote in his Diary, “that He has given me a particular fervor this morning in my prayer for His blessing upon our Meeting.

“I humbly desire—1st, The Lord’s presence; 2nd, That He will give a spirit of secret prayer to all who come, that we may meet in a praying spirit; 3rd, That He will give us wisdom and prudence, and meekness and love, and make our Meeting similar to the meeting of the Apostles at Jerusalem, when they were assembled with one accord in an upper chamber; 4th, That He would suggest to our minds anything that may be useful in this business; 5th, That He will bless this Church, and make a little Meeting, of different denominations, the forerunner to a large and general assembly of all Christians.”

The company consisted of the Revs. Daniel Wilson, Burder, Edward Irving, Jabez Bunting, Dr. Waugh, and Dr. Steinkoff. The resolutions agreed upon were: That there should be a fuller meeting on Friday, the 30th; and that in the meantime prayer should be made for direction and a blessing. The next Meeting was attended by fifteen Ministers, who agreed to come together again on April 13th; and several similar Meetings were held in the course of the spring and summer. At “the May Meetings,” “the im-

portance of prayer for the general influence of the Holy Spirit was made the subject of the first Resolution" at the anniversaries of several Societies; and about the same time a new impetus was given to the movement by the publication of a second and larger treatise by Mr. Stewart, entitled, "Thoughts on the Importance of Special Prayer for the General Outpouring of the Spirit."

The following extracts from this Tract, which has since been circulated by myriads,* in various countries of the world, may enable any who are not yet acquainted with it to judge of its scope and style. It begins thus:—

"It has been observed of the works of man, that they are complex in their construction, and trivial in their effects. A machine of a thousand wheels is employed to produce a silken thread. On the contrary, the works of God are remarkable for their simplicity; the greatest effects proceeding from the most simple means. Thus at the Creation God said, 'Let there be light,—and there was light.' By a single word the regions of boundless space were gloriously illuminated. So in the doctrines of His religion. This is the answer given to all who seek salvation: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'† The simple act of true faith receives Christ Jesus,‡ gives peace with God through Christ our Lord,§ purifies the heart,¶ works by love,¶ and overcomes the world.** Again; in His Divine ordinances, by the simple

* The Religious Tract Society did not begin to publish it immediately after it appeared; but that Society alone had issued up to February, 1855, EIGHTY-NINE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIX copies of it. It is numbered 263 in the Tract Society's Catalogue.

† Acts xvi. 31.
‡ Acts xv. 9.

‡ John i. 12.
¶ Gal. v. 6.

¶ Romans v. 1.
** 1 John v. 4.

elements of bread and wine, the death of Christ is commemorated, a public profession of faith in His name is made, believers receive the seal of the new covenant, and a visible communion and fellowship are preserved amongst His disciples.

"An attention to this part of the Divine economy, united with a diligent study of the Sacred Scriptures, gives a hope of obtaining a very important blessing by a very simple process. There are few who rightly contemplate the misery of man and the exceeding riches of the grace of God, who are not often inquiring, What can be done to overcome the evil, and extend the good; to destroy the works of darkness, and to enlarge and establish the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ? This is the simple but sufficient answer to this question,—LET ALL SINCERE CHRISTIANS UNITE IN EARNEST PRAYER FOR THE GENERAL OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. This will be the most likely mode to bring down an extensive blessing on mankind.

"By the OUTPOURING of the Holy Spirit, is meant, according to the frequent use of the term in the sacred volume, the gift of a large measure of His Divine influences. . . . By a GENERAL outpouring of the Holy Spirit is intended a GRANT as wide in extent as it is abundant in measure; a GRANT which may include all bishops, pastors, ministers and teachers at home; all missionaries and Christian instructors abroad; a GRANT which may enliven, purify, and establish those Christian churches whose foundations are already laid; and plant, enlarge, and extend others not yet begun: a GRANT which may increase the zeal, and love, and holiness of all true Christians, and give spiritual life and light to sinners now dead in trespasses and sins: a GRANT which may bring the Divine blessing upon the

labours of the Christian press throughout the world, and give wisdom, simplicity, and success to every religious and benevolent institution: a GRANT which may comprehend both the Jew and the Gentile: or, to sum up all in one sentence, such a grant of the Divine influences of the Holy Spirit, as 'shall fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, even as the waters cover the sea.'

"By UNITING all sincere Christians in prayer for this blessing, no union is intended which may interfere with the rules or discipline of any particular church or religious society; neither is any union meant which may produce noise or external show. It is intended that each Christian should associate in prayer with those of his own immediate communion, or with those with whom he has before held religious exercises, whilst he unites in heart with all who are seeking the same object."

The following reasons for this union in prayer are then suggested and enlarged upon:—

"I. Because the times are—1. Eventful;—2. Times which have shown that human means, however excellent, are inadequate to effect any extensive melioration in the state of man;—3. Times in which we have obtained a much more accurate knowledge of the misery of man in a state of sin;—4. Times in which many professing Christians are supine;—5. Times 'in which missionaries engaged in the conversion of the heathen agree that no success, upon any extensive scale, can be expected without a peculiar outpouring of the Holy Spirit.'

"II. Because that it is in a special manner, by the gracious and powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, that the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be established.

"III. Because the Scriptures predict a day when the

Holy Spirit shall be given in a very abundant manner; and that this blessing will be preceded by earnest prayer.

"IV. Because the delightful consequences which will follow this general outpouring of the Holy Spirit should quicken devotional ardour.

"V. Because each Christian will derive personal benefit from this devotional exercise, even if this union should not be extensive, or the blessing generally desired."

Then follows a fervent appeal to Christian ministers, and an earnest exhortation to all sincere followers of the Saviour. After which the Tract ends with these observations:—

"That your future progress may correspond with this beginning, let me recommend you to search the Scriptures daily; to seek a conversation becoming the Gospel; to be particularly cautious against grieving the Holy Spirit; and to cultivate brotherly love to all Christians, and goodwill to all mankind. For many an age the world has been trying what pride, and vanity, and strife, and selfishness could effect; and, after all their experiments, they find 'there is no peace to the wicked.' Let the Church of Christ take another course. Let it be seen what faith, and love, and peace, and harmony, and goodwill can produce. The religion of our Blessed Lord has never yet shone with its proper lustre. When it first appeared, it had to defend itself against all the prejudices of the Jews, and against all the ignorance and idolatry of the Gentiles; and since its truth has been established, the divisions of Christians have weakened its force and marred its beauty.

"Let it now manifest its true character,—'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.' (John xiii. 35.)"

In the month of May he prepared* to visit different towns in England and Scotland, with the view of personally directing the attention of his Christian brethren to the subject of these "Thoughts;" and on the 20th of June he set out on a tour, which eventually extended to the sister country. In Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Northumberland, Edinburgh, Lanark, Glasgow, Paisley, Dublin, and other places, he assembled Christian Ministers—addressed them on his favourite topic—engaged with them in fervent prayer—and left them, not only grateful for the manner in which he had fixed their attention on a great truth, but resolved to bring that truth, as well as the duties naturally arising out of it, more prominently before their people.

The following extracts from letters written to his wife during the journey, contain some interesting particulars of the efforts which he made, and the results which followed them:—

"Spratton, June 21, 1821.

"Your sweet letter arrived at a most propitious moment. I opened it just after our Meeting at Creton, which closed this morning with earnest prayer. All yesterday was devoted to the consideration of the subject. There were present twenty-two Ministers, who entered heartily into the subject. They passed a resolution agreeing themselves individually to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit every Sabbath morning, and to recommend their people to do the same; also agreeing to preach, and recommending me to continue my journey on this subject."

* He obtained at this time, from Dr. Brown of Biggar, a list containing the names of 218 Ministers of various denominations in Scotland, who might be expected to co-operate in the work in which he had engaged.

"Attercliffe, near Sheffield, July 3, 1821.

"Soon after my arrival [at Derby], I called upon Mrs. Newton, Miss White's sister. They had expected me, and kindly received me during my stay at Derby. Fifteen of the Clergy of Derby and the neighbourhood assembled, and all entered unanimately into the subject; all agreeing, by the Divine aid, to pray themselves in secret, and to recommend secret and family prayer upon the subject to their flocks. They also contemplated a Monthly Lecture at Derby, which the neighbouring Clergy will attend, in which this subject is to be particularly considered. They all agreed also to preach more upon the offices of the Holy Spirit. . . . Yesterday ten Clergymen [of Sheffield and the neighbourhood], accompanied by Mr. Montgomery the poet (a truly good man, a Moravian), met at dinner here. We afterwards discussed our topic. I feel truly thankful that they entered into it with equal zeal. The pastors of above a hundred thousand souls were assembled. They came to the same resolutions as the Clergy at Derby, acknowledging that, as yet, the office of the Holy Spirit had not been sufficiently considered, and determining, by Divine aid, to preach more upon the subject. It was a very happy time. On Thursday, D.V., I am going to Huddersfield; and expect to be at Leeds on Saturday, and to leave it on Tuesday morning; then I proceed, without going to York, to Northumberland."

"Huddersfield.

"I left the hospitable roof of our dear brother Blackburn this morning, and arrived at Mr. Maddock's (clergyman of this place) this afternoon. As if to give me the privilege of writing to you, he was engaged to a neighbour this evening. I therefore profit by the opportunity to tell

you that the Lord's goodness still follows me. We had another Meeting of the Clergy at Sheffield yesterday, at which they came to several important Resolutions. In the evening I had the opportunity of preaching in the large Church upon the subject. Ten of the Clergy, and a tolerable congregation, were present. May the Lord follow the word with His Divine blessing!"

"Dalry House, Edinburgh.

"I have been busy every day, and have this day enjoyed the retirement of this hospitable abode at Lady Carnegie's. Yesterday the Meeting took place with the Ministers—there were some of different denominations—and, though not numerous attended, was very interesting. They adjourned till Monday, that they might decide upon some Resolutions which they propose to adopt. The subject has been taken up very warmly here. Many of the 'Hints' have been published, and circulated in different parts of Scotland."

"Edinburgh, July 18, 1821.

"I have been arranging the Meeting of the Clergy; which, D.V., is to take place on Friday. . . . The subject I am upon loses none of its importance; but it is the Lord alone who can keep us in the Spirit."

"Rosebank, August 1, 1821.

"Yesterday I went into Glasgow, and saw Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Wardlaw, and Mr. Muir. They all entered very warmly upon the subject of my mission."

"Rosebank, Saturday Evening,

"August 4, 1821.

"Since I wrote to you, the Meeting has taken place with the Ministers here. It was attended by Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Wardlaw, Dr. Dick, and about fifteen other Clergymen and Ministers, all of whom were of one mind upon the importance of the subject. Some of them expressed great delight in the union which the Meeting inspired. They thought it a most favourable sign that so many were led by the Holy Spirit to prayer upon this subject. They could not finish their business on Friday, but adjourned the Meeting till Monday, when they are to pass some Resolutions expressive of their sentiments upon the subject."

"No. 20, Grenville Street, Dublin,

"May 15, 1821.

"Lord Lorton is in Dublin; and to-morrow I am to be at his house upon my business. I think of returning by Holyhead, Shrewsbury, Worcester, Herefordshire, &c., so as to take a new line of Clergy on my return."

"Shrewsbury, Saturday Evening.

"On my arrival here, last night, I found the places all taken for Cheltenham, which prevented my going forward this morning. Upon speaking to the two Clergymen here, they much wished me to stop the Sabbath, as they think it will be very useful to let our subject be generally known here. Entreating the Lord for direction, I have complied with their wishes, and have taken my place for Cheltenham on Monday. I regret much that it delays me another day from you, as I cannot do any good at Cheltenham without stopping a few hours there. I purpose, therefore, to go over on the morning of Tuesday to Gloucester, to sleep at Painswick, at Mr. Charles Neville's, and then, D.V., to come to town on Wednesday."

A document relating to the conference at Glasgow supplies a specimen of the manner in which the Meetings

were usually conducted, and of the practical consequences which generally ensued:—

“*Glasgow, August 3, 1821.*”

“A MEETING of Ministers, of various denominations, in this city and neighbourhood, was this day held in the Tron Church Session House, for the purpose of friendly conference on the best means of exciting Christians in general to prayer for the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in order to the advancement of personal and family religion, the efficacy of the ministry of the Word at home, and the success of Missionary labours abroad.

“Present—Mr. Stewart, Minister of Percy Chapel, London, by whose invitation the Meeting was convened; and of the Established Church, Dr. Chalmers, Mr. Graham (Calton), Mr. Forman (Kirkintilloch), Mr. Logan (Eastwood), Mr. Mackenzie (Gaelic Chapel, Gorbals), Mr. Burns (Paisley), Mr. Muir (St. James’s), Mr. Thomas; of the Secession Church, Dr. Dick, Dr. Mitchell, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Kidston, Mr. Muter; of the Independents, Dr. Wardlaw.

“Dr. Dick having been requested to preside, the Meeting was opened with prayer by Dr. Chalmers; and Mr. Muir was appointed Clerk. After which, Mr. Stewart explained at some length the design for which he had called it, insisting from the Scriptures, on the indispensable necessity of Divine influence, the encouragement given by the promises of God to look for it, and the obligations to prayer for the fulfilment of those promises; and a number of the Ministers present having expressed their views and feelings on the subject, it was agreed to adjourn till Monday ext, the 6th inst., to meet again at the same place and time; and in the mean time, Dr. Wardlaw, Mr. Kid-

ston, and Mr. Muir, were nominated as a Committee, to draw out suitable Resolutions and to report.

“The Meeting expressed their cordial gratitude to the Rev. Mr. Stewart for having called them together on such a subject, and for his Christian exertions in so good a cause; and Dr. Mitchell concluded with prayer.”

The Resolutions which followed on this as on other occasions, related to the importance of private and family prayer for the Holy Spirit, the holding of periodical meetings of Ministers, and preaching upon the work of the Spirit.

Mr. Stewart rejoiced greatly in the unanimity which prevailed.

“It is truly delightful,” he wrote to his friends at Seaford, “to see Ministers of so many denominations sinking their little differences, and calling upon one another to engage in prayer. If it be thus with the watchmen, we may hope it will soon be thus with the inhabitants of Zion. What should be much our study should be a spirit of wisdom, and meekness, and prudence, and forbearance, and gentle waiting, according to the verse of a Hymn lately sung by a dear Christian friend,—

“‘Unite my roving thoughts, unite
In silence soft and sweet;
And thou, my soul, sit gently down
At thy great Sovereign’s feet.’”

“David’s motto would be useful for us all,—‘Be still, and know that I am God.’ I feel more persuaded that the Holy Spirit acts most in this way. His voice is not in the wind. It is a still small voice; a voice that leads to

silent prayer, to prudent watchfulness, to constant effort, to patient waiting, to simple confidence: a voice, in short, which speaks of Jesus—which points to Him for merit, for strength, for example, for all we need. In Thee are all my springs. We advance when we become more submissive to the will of God: when we bear with greater ease the trials of the day. Our wish is for joyful, peaceful, or loving feelings: but our true happiness is in being of no reputation, in mortifying sin, in rest of heart, in overcoming self, and in earnestly desiring the prosperity of Zion. Oh, that we might thus advance! Oh, that we might take up our Bibles, desiring to be taught of the Lord—sitting where Mary sat, at the feet of Jesus! I can find no station so safe, so happy, as her’s. Here is everything which can preserve from sin—can protect in danger—and can excite the soul to holiness. May the Saviour be increasingly precious to us. May we see Him in all His fulness—as the gift of the Father—as made ours by the Holy Spirit—as secured to us by an everlasting covenant. May we seek for enlarged views—such as may tend to raise holy affections—to lead us out of ourselves, and to fix us more and more upon our Blessed Saviour. My pen has run much faster than I thought for; but when we begin to speak of our Lord, is it surprising? As one of your old writers says, ‘If all the seas were turned into ink, and all the feathers which were ever seen were united into one quill, guided by the hand of one who understood all languages, still all would be too little to describe our Saviour.’ He is indeed, ‘the chiefest of ten thousand.’ Oh, may His love fill our souls, and animate our hearts. I have left no room for my kind wishes to all of you, and to all my Christian friends. I therefore sum

up my desires for them in one short petition, ‘May they be filled with the Spirit.’

“Very affectionately yours,

“J. H. STEWART.”

It is natural to inquire what spiritual benefits resulted from the various efforts which he made to fix the thoughts of his fellow-Christians on the work of God the Holy Ghost. But it is not easy to obtain an accurate reply. Even the holiest may not be able to receive without injury a knowledge of all the success which God bestows on their exertions: and many efforts of Christ’s servants will not “be found unto honour” till the day of His appearing. But, when we consider that truth sanctifies; that sound doctrine is one of the appointed instruments for producing holy resolutions; and that a blessing is expressly promised to asking for the Holy Spirit; we can hardly fail to conclude, that there must have been, whether apparent or not, most blessed results in the souls of pastors and people, when bands of Ministers were induced to think seriously upon an important truth, to set forth that truth more distinctly in their preaching, and to make common supplication for “the promise of the Father.” Some at least of these consequences became known to Mr. Stewart. He heard of pastors who had found increasing comfort in their labours; of greater seriousness which had been visible in their congregations; of young persons, and in some cases whole families, who had joined the Holy Communion; of established Christians who had been edified; of greater zeal for the spread of the Gospel which had been provoked. And we may find a sample of the harvest which followed his sowing in a Letter written to him by a Reverend brother in Ireland, whose sphere of pastoral

duty he reached in his travels, and who has since been promoted to the Episcopal Bench:—

“I have not forgotten you, my dear friend, nor your object, since you did me the favour to spend a Sabbath under my roof. Every Sabbath morning between seven and eight, reminds me of you, when I am travelling through the world, I trust, in the best earthly company, and not without even nobler companions. I thank God that your object of uniting all Christians in prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit is very near my heart; and I must say that, under God, I have to thank you for sweeter hours of prayer than I have ordinarily enjoyed before. Most of the serious people around me are on their knees at the same hour on the Sabbath morning; and all express to me the spiritual pleasure they enjoy in the idea of so many agreeing together to pray for the same most desirable blessing. Whatever good may be done abroad (and can we doubt extensive good, when the Lord excites His people to pray?) this I know, much good is done at home. Ministers meet their flocks with a different feeling, and flocks hear their Minister with more prepared hearts. I am sure I never ascended the pulpit with so many serious prayers for a blessing from above, as since I had the pleasure of first seeing your Paper in the ‘Christian Observer.’ Neither have I been quite idle in making known the plan to others. I have mentioned it at Bible Meetings; I have spoken to our clerical friends at our Monthly Meetings; I have mentioned it in private; and I always found a pleasurable feeling produced by the very mention of such a simple bond of union among Christians, and at the same time such a powerful organ for overthrowing the kingdom of Satan. That we may all know more of the

published in his park a seminary for Jewish students, which was then conducted by Mr. Jacob. Mr. Stewart, always fond of an opportunity of helping the Jewish cause, arranged to give a lecture to the young candidates for Missionary labour twice in every week, and otherwise endeavoured to promote their spiritual welfare. But his heart was chiefly set upon the work in which he had been engaged during the previous summer; and at the beginning* of the New Year (1822) he published some of the satisfactory results of his journeys, concluding the recital with the following practical remarks:—

“It is hoped that this intelligence may, by the Divine blessing, excite heads of families and pious individuals to more earnest prayer for the gracious influences of the Comforter, and that Ministers may be led with increasing zeal to attempt to interest their charges in this all-important subject. The commencement of a New Year is a most appropriate season for engaging with redoubled earnestness in this sacred work. When we contemplate the numbers constantly passing into an eternal world; that ere another year closes twenty millions at least of our fellow-sinners will have passed hence; that however extensive may be the outward means used for their conversion, unless they receive the Spirit of God they cannot see His kingdom; when we bear in mind, also, that our Heavenly Father has connected the gift of the Holy

He it was who paid its debt; it was he who, on many occasions, was its friend; and it will be gratifying to those who knew his worth, to hear that, by the grace of God, his end was peace.”

* He wrote in his Diary, Jan. 4th, 1822:—“The state of my mind at this moment is a longing for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”

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Ghost with prayer for this blessing, and has promised to hear our petitions by the most tender similes; whoever seriously reflects upon these truths will feel deeply humbled that he has devoted so small a portion of his time to a direct application to a Throne of Grace. He will commence the year with these solemn inquiries:—**WHAT HAVE I HITHERTO DONE TO PROMOTE PRAYER FOR THE COMFORTER? AND WHAT CAN I DO MORE THAN I HAVE ALREADY ATTEMPTED?** Oh, that these inquiries might be general! That in this New Year the Church of Christ would say with the Patriarch, ‘I WILL NOT LET THEE GO EXCEPT THOU BLESS ME.’”

In February, 1822, he visited Portsmouth, where a Meeting for his great object was held at Sir George Grey’s, after which the Clergy present agreed to deliver Lectures on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. On March 7th he attended a Meeting of the same kind at Chichester; and on March 25th, after again removing his family to London, he started on a tour for the Church Missionary Society, to Bristol, Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester; but wrote in his Diary, “My desire is to use these opportunities for exciting a spirit of prayer.” Consequently, at Gloucester, Resolutions were adopted, at a Meeting of Clergymen, similar to those which had been agreed upon at other places; and Lectures were delivered, one of them by the Bishop of the Diocese,* on the Person and Office of the Holy Ghost; and at Hereford† eleven

* Good Bishop Ryder had written to him, in January, 1821, with reference to his “Hints:”—“I . . . generally, much approve of the Paper, as I do of the object.”

† At Worcester, also, Lectures on the same subject were delivered by Mr. Lake; who, having been much interested by an Address which he heard from Mr. S., asked, through Lord Rocksavage, for written Notes of it.

Clergymen, who met at the house of the Rev. H. Gipps, made the following declaration :—

“ We, the undersigned Ministers and Brethren in the Lord, desire to acknowledge, as a subject of deep humiliation, that although we have in theory acknowledged the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit, we have in fact too much neglected the practice of special and distinct prayer with a view to obtaining that blessing. We feel thankful to God that this subject has been brought before us on the present occasion; and, in dependance on His blessing, we purpose :—

“ 1st. That we will endeavour to bear this great and important subject constantly in mind in our private and family devotions; and, particularly, that we will set apart some portion of the Lord’s-day (say between the hours of seven and eight in the morning) to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on our own souls, our private ministrations, on the flocks committed to our charge, on the Church and nation, and on the Church of Christ in general; on every Society which has for its objects the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ, whether among professing Christians, Jews, or Heathen; and that we will use our diligent efforts to induce others, particularly our several congregations, to adopt the same devotional practice.

“ 2ndly. That in our pastoral addresses we will, in a more especial manner, call the attention of our flocks to the Person, Work, and Offices of the Holy Ghost; and warn them against resisting, grieving, or quenching Him; and press on their attention the privilege of living and walking in the Spirit.

“ 3rdly. That we will introduce this subject, as we have opportunity, in conversation with Christian friends; in Meetings held for the extension and enlargement of the Redeemer’s kingdom upon earth; and in public Lectures at stated seasons, which may be fixed upon as suitable on some future occasion. We conclude with imploring the blessing of God on these our purposes, and on His servant who has been instrumental in bringing the subject forward to our notice.

(Signed) “ H. GIPPS, *Chairman.*”

In June, when visiting his friend Mr. Ramsden at Spratton, he attended a Clerical Meeting at Creaton, where Resolutions for prayer were renewed. In November his Diary reveals a continuance of his usual zeal for accomplishing the same end :—

“ No. 11, *Alfred Place, Friday, Nov. 1822.*

“ On Monday, September 16, I left town with Mr. Bickersteth to attend the Church Missionary Meetings at Wycombe and Reading. On Wednesday, the 18th, I went to Bradfield, where I remained till Monday, the 23rd, preaching at Ashampstead on Sunday, the 22nd. On Tuesday, 24th September, I delivered an address at the Church Missionary House, to the Missionaries, &c. going to Africa; and on Wednesday, the 25th, left town again for the Ipswich and Norwich Meetings for the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews.* I returned home on Tuesday, the 8th October; and remained till Wednesday, 23rd October, when I went to Woburn,†

* Miss Hancock, of Norwich, soon afterwards wrote to him :—“ The Wesleyans have held a Conference, in which they determined, in consequence of reading your Paper, to have a Quarterly Prayer Meeting, for the express purpose of supplicating the effusion of the Holy Spirit of Promise.”

† His correspondent at Woburn was the Rev. Charles Bridges.

to attend the formation of a Clerical Meeting. On Sunday last, 27th October, I preached at Rams Chapel, for the Church Missionary Society. At all these places I have cause to be thankful. In my different Speeches and Sermons I dwelt upon the importance of prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit. At Norwich, the Clergy agreed immediately to commence a course of Lectures. At Ipswich they agreed to act, but came not to a decision as to particulars. At Woburn it was determined (D.V.) to have a course of Sermons at Wycombe. I bless and praise the Lord that the Brethren willingly engaged in this subject. Oh that our gracious God would graciously fill us with His Spirit, and enable us in all things to glorify His name.”

Towards the close of this year he was occupied in drawing up Forms of Prayer to be used at the Committee Meetings of various religious Societies: and he had previously prepared a similar Prayer as a help to certain pious officers who assembled for common supplication at Portsmouth, Dublin, Edinburgh, Woolwich, &c.; following an example set, at his instigation, by several members of the Committee of the Naval and Military Bible Society in London. But the time was now approaching when his labours in the manner of an Evangelist were to give place to those of the Pastor, by his resuming his former position as the regular Minister of a Congregation. Mr. Noel being obliged to travel on the Continent for his wife’s health (December, 1822), left him in charge of Percy Chapel; and in the following March finally retired from that sphere of duty, with which he had been connected during the greater part of four years.

The following letter was written by Mr. Stewart to his friends at Seafeld about this time :—

“ 13, *Seymour Street West, 20th Dec. 1822.*

“ MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—

* * * * *

“ The year has nearly closed, and what am I to say of it, but that He has crowned it with His goodness. How delightful it is to trace the hand of our Heavenly Father leading us through another stage on our pilgrimage, and bringing us one step nearer home. Ought we not, like children at school, to mark off with pleasure another day passed? Oh, that we could live with Heaven in our eye; that we could habitually praise God for His mercies! How sweet would be the bread which the precious blood of Jesus has purchased for us! How refreshing the sleep which has been afforded by His tender care! Surely we live far below our privileges, when our daily comforts do not draw out our hearts; and yet these are as nothing to our hopes—our hope of seeing the Saviour’s kingdom spread on earth, and dwelling with Him in eternal glory! Why has such mercy been extended to us? Why are we the objects of His favour? Behold, what manner of love it is, to tell us, ‘ You are mine!’ Could we but more realize what we have received, our hope of future blessedness would be stronger. He has given us His Son. He has given us to feel our need of Him—to put our trust in Him—to desire to be like Him. Will this love stop its course? No; as I lately heard, His wrath is in vials, His loving-kindness a flowing river—ever coming from His throne. How does the close of the year find you, my dear sister? Surely we must all lament our unprofitableness—the little progress we have made, and the opportunities we have lost. But are our desires stronger, our hopes firmer, our watchfulness greater? Are we more delivered from self, and [do we] desire to be in the world as members of Christ, to re-

joy in the joy of His kingdom, and to mourn for the sins and miseries of the world? We live in times when all our heart should be at work for the Saviour. Oh, what blissful prospects do we enjoy! You will be pleased to hear, that at Paris a Meeting has been established for Prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit. The subject increases in interest daily. Oh! for the fatness of the latter rain—for more love to Christians, and more light to the world! This year has been one in which the dawn of glory has brightened, and in which the powers of darkness have been more at work. We have lately established a Prayer Meeting at Percy for the Jews. It is yet only a Quarterly Meeting; but it will, I trust, advance.

“Our very dear Brother, Mr. Noel, has been obliged to take Mrs. Noel for a short time to the Continent, and has made my path clear to be in London this winter. We are still kept in a pilgrimage state; but I cannot tell you what pleasant resting-places are given us. We are led to our present spot to be near Mr. ——; but I trust, before the season ends, we shall see that other causes have fixed this dwelling for us. We look into the Park at the back of our house, and are remarkably quiet and airy. Oh, how thankful ought we to be for our Heavenly Father’s guidance! I send you an address I delivered to two Jewish Missionaries. Blessed be the Lord, I have found increasing pleasure since I have attended more to this subject. My dear sister Mary, indeed, my three sisters, must have the Jews in their hearts to increase their blessedness. If we are spared to the New Year, their Committee is to meet on every Friday evening for prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit. Oh, may this New Year be indeed a jubilee year—may still-increasing mercies swell our songs!

“I have been much pleased with a small pamphlet in

letters, by Mr. Carr, of Cambuslang, on the above subject. It is printed at Glasgow; if you approve of it, you will perhaps, assist its circulation. I thank my sister for her donation to the Nice Church. I feel a pleasure that the House of Lauriston should have a brick in that building. You will be pleased that on the 2nd of this month it was opened; the Rev. Lewis Way preaching in the morning, and his brother-in-law, Mr. Whitley, in the evening. The whole of the English residents were there, except six invalids. Captain Pearson writes, full of praise and thankfulness, ‘may that Church be as a leaven to Italy, and purify that land, so long defiled with Papal superstition.’

“My dearest wife unites in kindest love. May grace, mercy, and peace be with you. Pray remember us very kindly to all our dear friends. Pray for us.

“Yours very affectionately,
“J. H. STEWART.”

One other publication, having reference to the topic which he had so often brought under the notice of the Christian world, was issued by Mr. Stewart in 1823;* and as Percy Chapel was closed for repairs soon after the conclusion of Mr. Noel’s ministry in it, he did not thoroughly resume his pastoral work until the autumn of that year. Meanwhile, he took a journey to Colchester, Bedford, Yorkshire, and Scotland; preached repeatedly for one of the religious Societies; established at least one more

* This pamphlet was entitled, “The State of the Metropolis; or, the Importance of a Revival of Religion in London.” It contained a repetition of his former appeals for Prayer, supported by arguments having special reference to the great city in which he was about to renew his ministry.

union for prayer; again held Meetings in Edinburgh and Glasgow, like those which he had attended on former occasions; and, having thus increased the reputation which he had been gradually acquiring throughout Great Britain and Ireland, he was enabled, in future years, when less at liberty to travel, still to exert a wide-spread influence on behalf of the great object which continued to interest him as long as he lived.*

* A remarkable proof of the extent to which his Tracts had awakened respect for him, was given to his youngest son and namesake, when travelling through the United States in 1853. Arriving in Washington on the day of the inauguration of the newly-elected President, he found the Hotels so full that it seemed improbable that he could procure a bed at any price; but in one of them, where he had begged hard to be accommodated, the book-keeper said to him, “Write down your name, and put a cross to it, and I will see what can be done.” At the sight of the words, J. Haldane Stewart, the man said, “I know that name, but cannot remember how;” then added, after his memory had been refreshed: “You’re all right, I’ll take care of you;” and contrived to accommodate him.